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Large scale cross border drug trafficking investigation results in another conviction

PORTLAND, MAINE—United States Attorney Paula D. Silsby and Special Agent-in-Charge Bruce M. Foucart of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Office of Investigations in Boston announced today that a defendant in a large-scale drug trafficking organization was convicted by jury yesterday, marking the culmination of a multi-year investigation by ICE and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). The defendant, John Parsley, is one of 16 individuals in the U.S. who have been convicted as a result of the investigation into this marijuana and ecstasy smuggling organization. The organization operated in Maine, New Brunswick, and Quebec, Canada, and other northeastern U.S. states.

“This criminal organization smuggled and trafficked an enormous amount of illegal drugs into this country and onto the streets of our communities,” said Special Agent-in-Charge Foucart. “ICE is pleased to have had the support of the RCMP and so many law enforcement partners in the takedown of this criminal enterprise. Together we have significantly disrupted the supply of marijuana and ecstasy being brought into the U.S. ICE will continue to aggressively seek out criminal organizations who put profit before public safety.”

Over 1,500 pounds of high-grade hydroponic marijuana with an estimated street value of \$3.5 million were seized during several operations that targeted the northern Maine border. The drugs were smuggled from New Brunswick, Canada into northern Maine. A variety of smuggling methods were used to include bringing the drugs by boat across the St. John River, by snowmobiles, ATVs, and in one instance, concealed in a false compartment of a gasoline tank located in the bed of a pick-up truck. The drugs were transported south through Maine from Canada with an ultimate destination of major cities in the northeastern U.S. More than \$4 million worth of assets have been forfeited in connection with this case.

A total of 31 individuals have been arrested in the U.S. and Canada in connection with this investigation. As part of the RCMP portion of the investigation, the RCMP in New Brunswick seized nearly 112,000 pills of ecstasy having an estimated street value of \$447,000.

Eleven individuals were arrested in Canada having direct ties to this criminal organization.

Other agencies involved in the investigation included the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, the Maine Drug Enforcement Agency, U.S. Border Patrol, and the Maine State Police.

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